GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:44
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2000
BONDED LABOUR
CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Anti Slavery International has asked the Government to undertake a comprehensive national survey as recommended by the International Labour Organisation to identify the total number of bonded labourers is the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) the total number of bonded labourers estimated till the year 2000, consisting the adults and children?

Answer

MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

THE STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (A) TO (C) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 44 FOR 22.11.2000 REGARDING BONDED LABOUR.

The International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in its 88th session held in June, 2000 examined the issue of bonded labour in India through its Committee on Application of Standards, on the basis of representations made by several interest groups, including Anti Slavery International which urged the Government of India to undertake a comprehensive and authoritative survey to identify the total number of bonded labourers in the country.

The process of identification of bonded labour forms part of the functions vested upon the District Magistrates under sections 10,11 and 12 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act,1976 (which had earlier been promulgated as an Ordinance on 24.10.1975). The Act authorises the State Governments to confer powers on the District Magistrates to perform all or any of the functions which are required to be performed for identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour. It further provides for constitution of Vigilance Committees at District and Sub-Divisional levels with representation from Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe, social workers rural development agencies and financial and credit institutions. The process of identification of bonded labour is, therefore, an on-going one.

The Government have also implemented, since 1978, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded labourers. This scheme has been revised since May, 2000 enhancing the scales of benefits and providing for various new interventions to make it more effective. Under the recently revised scheme, provision has been made for grant to the State Governments at the rate of Rs. 2.00 lakhs per bonded labour-prone district for conducting surveys of bonded labourers once in three years and also for conducting evaluatory studies annually in five sensitive districts in each States.

In addition, the Supreme Court of India in the case of People`s Union of Civil Liberties Vs Government of Tamil Nadu and Others also appointed Commissioners in 1995 in 13 States to conduct surveys. After examining the reports, the Supreme Court has requested the National Human Rights Commission to monitor the case.

At present, on the basis of surveys conducted by the State Governments from time to time 2,80,411 bonded labourers have been identified and released as on 31.3.2000.